

Agenda No

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme

Name of Committee: Please select

Date of Meeting: 9 October 2020

Report Director: Head of Communities and Homes

Portfolio: Communities and Homes

Ward Relevance: All

Prior Consultation: Executive Director
Head of Communities and Homes
Chief Financial Officer
Legal Democratic and Electoral Services
Manager / Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: David Wortley, Community Advice and Support
Team Manager, 01788 533440

Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: Yes

Report En-Bloc: No

Forward Plan: No

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):

(CR) Corporate Resources To provide excellent, value for money services and sustainable growth

(CH) Communities and Homes Achieve financial self-sufficiency by 2020

(EPR) Environment and Public Realm Enable our residents to live healthy, independent lives

(GI) Growth and Investment Optimise income and identify new revenue opportunities (CR)

Prioritise use of resources to meet changing customer needs and demands (CR)

Ensure that the council works efficiently and effectively (CR)

Ensure residents have a home that works for them and is affordable (CH)

Deliver digitally-enabled services that residents can access (CH)

Understand our communities and enable people to take an active part in them (CH)

- Enhance our local, open spaces to make them places where people want to be (EPR)
- Continue to improve the efficiency of our waste and recycling services (EPR)
- Protect the public (EPR)
- Promote sustainable growth and economic prosperity (GI)
- Promote and grow Rugby's visitor economy with our partners (GI)
- Encourage healthy and active lifestyles to improve wellbeing within the borough (GI)
- This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

Statutory/Policy Background:

Summary:

To approve policies to support the administration of payments under the;

- Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme (standard scheme)
- Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme (discretionary scheme)

Both policies provide financial assistance to those who are required to self-isolate and face financial hardship if they are unable to work from home.

Financial Implications:

Grant funding has been awarded for both the administration of the scheme and payments made. Payments made under the standard scheme will be fully funded, however a limited grant of £23,000 has been received for payments under the discretionary scheme which will fund 46 applications.

Risk Management Implications:

- 1) Demand for discretionary payments will exceed funding available
- 2) Fraudulent applications will be received
- 3) Recipients of the scheme fail to follow the requirement to self-isolate

Environmental Implications:

None

Legal Implications:

This decision is being made under emergency constitutional powers. This is due to COVID-19 and the requirement for this policy to be operational from the 12th October. Therefore the required notice and ability to hold a special council meeting is not possible. In the absence

of such meetings there are emergency powers that can be exercised by the Executive Director. This is in consultation with Group Leaders, the Mayor and the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny.

There is requirement for this policy to be put into effect as soon as possible. Overall this is in the best interest of the Council and the relevant parties that this policy will support.

An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3

Equality and Diversity:

An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3

Options:

1. The Test and Trace Support Payment Schemes (standard and discretionary) are approved.
2. Amended policies are approved

Recommendation

The Executive Director under emergency delegated authority approves the adoption of the Rugby Borough Council The Test and Trace Support Payment Schemes as set out in Appendices 1 and 2

2) Delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities and Homes in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make any necessary amendments to ensure the scheme remains compliant with any changes in statute/government guidance.

3) Delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities and Homes to implement and administer a scheme in accordance with the principles of the attached policy.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- 1) Adoption of a policy to enable the financial support to those that are required to self-isolate in accordance with the legal requirements.
- 2) To enable the efficient administration of the scheme and minimising delay and contact with customers.
- 3) To administer the scheme meeting the needs of individuals whilst securing the scheme from fraud and abuse.
- 4) To ensure that minor changes to the policy can be made without need to refer to Full Council for approval.

Please select - 9 October 2020

Public Report of the Head of Communities and Homes

Recommendation

- 1) The Executive Director under emergency delegated authority approves the adoption of the Rugby Borough Council Test and Trace Support Payment Schemes as set out in Appendices 1 and 2
- 2) Delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities and Homes in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make any necessary amendments to ensure the schemes remain compliant with any changes in statute/government guidance.
- 3) Delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities and Homes to implement and administer schemes in accordance with the principles of the attached policies.

1. Background

- 1.1 From 28 September 2020, eligible individuals are entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500. This is to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and will lose income as a result.
- 1.2 The scheme started on 28 September 2020, and local authorities should have arrangements in place to administer payments by 12 October 2020. Someone told to self-isolate on or after 28 September (but before the scheme is operational in their local authority) will need to be able to make a backdated claim for payment. The scheme will last until 31 January 2021.

2. Aim of the Policies

- 2.1 These payments are designed to help ensure people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts self-isolate for the required period to stop the onward spread of the virus. They are also designed to encourage individuals who are eligible for this payment to get tested if they have symptoms. This is important to help stop the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further economic and societal restrictions.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 An applicant can apply for a payment under the standard scheme or a discretionary scheme. The policies to support both schemes are attached at appendices 1 and 2.

- 3.2 Eligibility for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment under the standard scheme is restricted to people who:
- have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
 - are employed or self-employed;
 - are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
 - are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.
- 3.3 The attached Test and Trace Support Payments (main scheme) Policy (Appendix 1) provides further details regarding the scheme.
- 3.4 Those applicants who do not receive one of the named benefits but do satisfy all other criteria will be able to apply for a discretionary award of £500.
- 3.5 The attached Test and Trace Support Payments (discretionary scheme) Policy (Appendix 2) identifies other factors that will be taken into account by the Council in deciding to award a discretionary payment.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 A grant of £25,700 has been received from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), to administer the scheme.
- 4.2 Awards made under the statutory scheme will be fully funded, an initial payment of £38,500 has been allocated and this will fund 77 awards. If the number of awards exceeds this amount, further funding will be provided.
- 4.3 Awards made under the discretionary scheme will be funded from a cash limited fund of £23,000. This will fund 46 discretionary awards. It has been confirmed that no further funding for discretionary awards will be provided. The Discretionary Scheme Policy, therefore is limited to providing discretionary payments in line with funding provided.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on 08 October 2020. The assessment has been considered in the formulation of the attached policies and there are no direct implications that need to be referred to within the body of this report.

6. Summary

- 6.1 The Council, together with Government, recognise that self-isolation continues to be one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. A package of legislative measures has been introduced to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and that those on a low income receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.

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Subject Matter:

Originating Department: Communities and Homes

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A